

HONORING PEGGY BAGGETT ON HER RETIREMENT AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION FOR THE ARTS

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Mr. MORAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Peggy J. Baggett, who will retire as the Executive Director of the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) on November 30, 2011. During her more than 30 years of service with the Commission for the Arts, Ms. Baggett directed the organization in an honest and innovative fashion, ensuring that all needs were met with the utmost attention.

After receiving her Master's degree in Arts Administration, Ms. Baggett joined the Virginia Commission for the Arts in 1976 as their Regional Coordinator. Her long list of responsibilities included: publicizing the programs and services of the Commission; providing assistance to arts organizations in applying for funds; evaluating activities funding by the Commission; coordinating the statewide Artists-in-Schools program; and consulting with non-profit arts organizations on a wide range of management problems.

In 1980, after only four years at the organization, Ms. Baggett was appointed as the Executive Director by Governor John Dalton. Her capacity to handle complex and long-term projects has been exceptionally impressive. Ms. Baggett's accountability oversaw the investment of state and federal resources in the arts and built a multi-tiered review system that is regarded as effective, fair, and consistent by leaders in the arts across the state. She has effectively worked with key legislators on both sides of the aisle on issues of importance to arts and culture while working in the administrations of three Republican Governors and five Democratic Governors. Ms. Baggett is nationally hailed as an expert on state resources, keeping the administrative costs of the agency low while focusing on providing the best possible service to the people of Virginia.

Peggy Baggett's long list of accomplishments includes numerous recognitions and awards. On January 8, 2011, she was awarded the Leadership in the Arts Award by the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA) "for her dedication and inspiring leadership in the arts of Virginia for over three decades and eight governors." Additionally, she garnered the Anne Brownson Award for Service to the Museum Profession from the Virginia Association of Museums in 2002, Award of Distinction from the Folk Art Society of Virginia in 2001, the Gary Young Award for Leadership in the State Arts Agency field from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies in 1999 and, in 1992, was named an Outstanding Woman of Virginia by the James Madison University Woman Faculty.

Along with her work at the Virginia Commission for the Arts, Peggy's clear dedication to the arts extends far beyond her regular working hours. From 1981 to 2009, she was on the Board of Directors of the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, which provides arts programs from Virginia to New York. During that time, she sat on the Board of Directors for the Richmond-First Club, serving as their President

from 1995 to 1996, and was also on the Board of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies from 1989 to 1995. From 1983 to 1985, she served on the Board for the Virginia Women's Cultural History Project. She has been also been a member of the Board and Chair of the Advisory Board for the Center for Arts Administration at the University of Wisconsin several times.

Ms. Baggett has continually and generously lent her skill and expertise to others by volunteering as an Advisory Panelist for numerous National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) programs during her career. Additionally, she has worked as an Advisory Panelist and expert for other arts institutions across the country. Her recent accomplishments are a reflection of her work at the VCA. Ms. Baggett's planning, oversight, and coordination surrounding the 2008 Governor's Awards for the Arts, the first Virginia Heritage Awards in 2009, and for MINDS WIDE OPEN: Virginia Celebrates Women in the Arts, the Commonwealth's largest collaboration in history in the arts and cultural community, were exemplary. Her industrious oversight and coordination of the distribution of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds for the arts in Virginia was well-executed and effective. Throughout her career at the VCA, Ms. Baggett has continued to promote the growth of the arts and cultural districts in localities across the state through conferences and training.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Ms. Peggy J. Baggett upon her retirement from the Virginia Commission for the Arts as their Executive Director. She has brought joy to countless individuals through her support and development of the arts in Virginia. I sincerely thank her for her service, and wish her the very best in all of her future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING RITA GELDERT ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT FROM THE CITY OF VISTA

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorable public service of Rita Geldert as she retires from City Manager of the City of Vista, California.

Mrs. Geldert was appointed as Vista's City Manager in 1997, after serving three years as Assistant City Manager. Under her tenure, Mrs. Geldert has helped spur economic expansion within the City and has helped to promote businesses and job growth within the community. Her tireless work to improve and strengthen infrastructure has not gone unnoticed. Mrs. Geldert has overseen countless projects that have had a great impact on the City and the surrounding area, ranging from the development of Vista Village to the new Civic Center.

Over the past 36 years, Mrs. Geldert has worked tirelessly in the field of public service. She has been active in the city management profession, serving on the Board of Trustees of the California City Management Foundation Board of Trustees while also being a member of multiple organizations relating to her position. Prior to her time spent as City Manager

and Assistant City Manager of Vista, she was the Director of Finance and Administration for the City of Dana Point, Management Services Officer for the City of Merced, and Personal Officer for the City of Vacaville. These positions exemplify Mrs. Geldert's dedication to not only the community she currently serves, but to the State of California and its citizens.

It is an honor to recognize Mrs. Geldert on the occasion of her retirement from over three decades of contributions to California communities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to please join me in recognizing Mrs. Rita Geldert's dedicated service to the City of Vista and the state of California.

HONORING ASHER B. DURAND, GEORGE INNESS, AND THE HUDSON RIVER SCHOOL OF PAINTERS

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the decision by the Architect of the Capitol to publicly display two important paintings in the Capitol Visitors Center. "The Discovery of the Hudson River" and "Entrance into Monterey," both by Albert Bierstadt, will welcome so many to the Capitol complex as they learn about the history and processes of our country. These works are part of the Hudson River School of Painters, and celebrate the beauty and diversity of the United States.

Coincidentally, two painters in the School have ties to my district in New Jersey. Asher Brown Durand was born, and later died, on a farm in my district. Although he began his career in engraving, Durand's legacy is in landscape painting, as one of the first artists of the Hudson River School of Painters. Durand's influence can be seen in another painter in the School, George Inness. Inness lived in Newark, a town I call home. Inness' distinct style combines the Hudson River School traditions with techniques he learned during travels in Western Europe.

Inness and Durand, like many of their fellow painters, traveled extensively abroad. Upon Durand's return to the United States, he took regular trips to paint the scenery of the Hudson River, the Adirondacks, and the White Mountains.

Durand's style was highly detailed, a hallmark of the School. One of Durand's most famous pieces, "Kindred Spirits," is often cited as one of the epitome of the School's values. This work cemented Durand's place at the forefront of the movement caused by the School.

Durand, as part of the first generation in the Hudson River School, is important because of his influence on later painters in the school, and on art in general. Durand helped form what is today known as the National Academy Museum and School, and served as president of the Academy for several years.

As the School's reputation increased, many of the School's painters traveled extensively to study, thus introducing these men to the culture of the grand capitals of Europe. This motivated many of the artists and other business leaders to found the Metropolitan Museum of